

(15)

RABY CASTLE *County of* DURHAM.

THIS castle was built by John de Neville, soon after the year 1377; at which time a licence for its erection was granted by Thomas Hatfield Bishop of Durham; a duplicate of it is still preserved among the Rolls of this Bishop marked B Sched. 5. N. 1. (50. Ed. 3. Anno 1377) in the Curfitors Office of Records at Durham.

THE manor of Raby had long been in the possession of this family, who held it of the See of Durham by a rent of 4l. and a stag, to be offered every year on Saint Cuthbert's day in September, on which a great dispute arose about the 13. Edw. I. Anno 1285, between Ralph Neville then Lord of Raby and Hugh de Darlington then Prior of Durham, as particularly related in Dugdale's Baronage V. i. p. 292. 293.

AFTER the accession of Hen. the II. Anno 1154, no one could build a castle without first having obtained a Royal licence. The County of Durham being a Palatinate, a power of granting such licence belonged to the Bishop, who is there considered as Viceroy, it is here inserted at length, in the language in which it is originally written, together with a translation.

"THOMAS, par la grace de Dieu, evesque de Duresme, a touz y qui cestez nos presentes lettres verront, ou orrount salut. Sachez que nous de nostre grace chere especial et pour le grant amour que nous avons enver nostre chere et foial John de Nevill, Chivaler, Sieur de Raby, qui de long temps adeste de nostre consaill, et nous servant, lui eions grante et tant que nous est et licence especiall donc quil puisse de son manior de Raby, qe'st dedenz nostre roial seignurie dedans nostre Evechee de Duresme, faire un chastell fraunchement a sa volonte, et touz le tours, mesons, et mures, d'y celle, batailler et kirneller, fans estreent empescher molester — ou autres nos subjitz — ou demurant dedenz nostre did seignurie roial. A voir et tenir perpetuellement a lui et a ses heires issuit quil ne feoit pas prejudicial ne damagous a nous, ne a nostre eglise de Duresme, ne a noz succeffour en nule temps a venire. En temonaunce de quels choses, nous avons faitez faire cestez noz letters patentes. Don a Duresme par les meins Williemi de Elmedon, nostre chauncellor, le disme jour de May, l'an. de nostre sacre trent et tierce.

Par lettre de private Seal.

RABY CASTLE *County of* DURHAM.

Translation.

"THOMAS by the grace of God, Bishop of Durham, to all those who shall see or hear these our present letters: Know ye, that we, of our dear and especial favor, and for the great love we bear to our dear and faithful John de Nevill Knight, lord of Raby, who has long been of our council and in our service, have granted, and as much as in us is, do licence him freely, according to his will, to make a castle of his manor of Raby, which is within our royal lordship, and in our bishoprick of Durham; and all the towers, houses, and walls thereof, to embattle and crenellate without restraint, hindrance, or molestation——or other our subjects——or living within our royal lordship, To have and to hold to him and his heirs for ever, provided it shall not be prejudicial or injurious to us, our church at Durham, nor to our successors in time to come. In witness whereof, we have caused these our letters patent to be made. Given at Durham by the hands of William de Elmedon our Chancellor, on the 10th. day of May, and in the 33d. of our Consecration.

By writ of Privy Seal.

IN 1570 this castle belonged to the Earl of Westmoreland with other large Possessions, which were forfeited by him to the Crown for Rebellion and Treason.

IN 1632 Sir Henry Vane the elder purchased of the Crown, the Castle with the Lordship of Raby and other Lands for 9904*l*.——He entertained Charles the first at the castle in May 1633 in his way to Scotland to be crowned: And did the like in April 1639 on the Kings expedition to Scotland, when Sir Henry commanded a Regiment of 1000 Men.

HE died at the castle in 1654 Aged 69.

THE ancient family of the Vanes, ennobled July 8. anno 1699' when Sir Chistopher Vane was created a Baron of this realm by the title of Lord Bernard of Bernardcastle. He was succeeded in his Estates and honours by his eldest Son Gilbert, whose Son Henry was created Viscount Bernard and Earl of Darlington April 3. 1754. His Son Henry, second Earl of Darlington, is (1785) the present proprietor of this noble edifice.